

# write a great resume!



...think  
like an  
employer!



***What is the  
“Think Like an Employer”  
Series?***

**Most people have many roles in their lives. You might be a student, a parent, an accident survivor or a world traveler.**

**These things might be very important to you. They might play a big part in the kind of work you look for. They might even be the reason why you are looking for work.**

**HOWEVER, when you are job-searching, you have a new role. To an employer, you are first and foremost a potential employee.**

**This series will help you play this new role well by understanding what employers need and want – in other words, by “thinking like an employer.”**

Revised August 2008

# What Happens to Resumes

Employers use resumes to help them decide who to interview for a job. They want to find the best person for the job as quickly as possible.

The problem is that employers often have stacks of resumes to go through. Many of those resumes are hard to read. Many don't clearly show employers why the person who sent them should be hired. These resumes don't help employers, so they are often thrown out or ignored. Don't let your resume be one of them!

## Write a Great Resume

### 1. Decide what you want to do

What kind of jobs are you going to apply for? Realistically, what would you enjoy and what could you get? Pick one, two or three kinds of jobs (e.g. a cashier and a receptionist). If you skip this step, your resume might wind up having nothing to do with the jobs that you apply for.

If the jobs you want are very different from each other, you might need 2 or 3 different resumes.

If you're applying at a lot of large companies, consider making a separate "e-resume" that can be read by computers and scanners. There is a sample e-resume in our "Great Resume Samples."

### 2. Write down what you have to offer

Include work experience, skills and training. You can use the Resume Worksheet at the end of this handout to get started. Use more paper if you need it. Be sure to fill in all the sections – things like volunteer experience can tell an employer a lot about your skills.



### 3. Find out what employers want

Look at ads. What qualifications do they ask for? Ask people who already have the kind of job you want. Try thinking about what you would do in that job and what would help you to do it well. For example, a short-order cook would have to be able to work quickly. You can also find information about the skills required for different jobs at 2nd Chance (ask a staff person), the library (ask a reference librarian) or on the internet (for example at [www.jobfutures.ca](http://www.jobfutures.ca) or <http://careermatters.tv.org>).

### 4. Find matches between what you have and what employers want

Go through the Resume Worksheet (or a list of your qualifications). Use a highlighter to mark everything that matches the qualifications needed for the job you want. Think creatively! It doesn't have to match exactly to be relevant.



Now, look at which sections you've highlighted. Sections such as contact information and employment history are required on a resume. Consider including other sections if they have a lot of highlighted items. You might start thinking of new things that you didn't write down at first. Great! Add them in!

### 5. Show employers what you've got!

Choosing good information to put on your resume is a great start. But you also need to arrange and word your information so that the employer sees how good it is. Use the following tips to help you think like an employer! You can also use the example on page 4 to help, or ask a 2nd Chance staff person for more examples.

# Remember!



Employers spend an average of 30 seconds reading your resume the first time. Get them to read it again! Make sure your best and most important information stands out. You can do this by:

- Putting it closer to the start of your resume
- CAPITALIZING or **bolding** it (be careful not to go overboard)
- Keeping more white space around it

And never put negative or personal information on your resume!

## ***MORE TIPS...***

<b>When you do this:</b>	<b>The employer thinks this:</b>
Use simple, clear words and details to illustrate	This is easy to follow – this person’s skills really stand out
Use clear headings for different sections (you can choose different heading names as long as they are clear – e.g. “Highlights” could also be “Summary of Skills”)	This person is well-organized – I can find the information I want
Include key skills	That’s just what I was looking for!
Be brief and direct (maximum 2 pages)	This person respects how busy I am
Make it look nice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep it fairly simple</li><li>• Don’t cram too much on one page</li><li>• Use good quality paper and computer printer - never handwrite a resume!</li></ul>	This looks easy to read – and this person is a tidy, professional type
Check for spelling and grammar errors	This person can write well and is not sloppy
Make sure you are sending it to the right place and the right person	If they don’t get your resume they can’t think about you at all!

# When You are Done

**Keep your Resume Worksheet** and your notes about what employers want. If you are applying for several different types of jobs, you need several resumes. Start again and make another one!

**Learn more about resumes** by asking at 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance. We can look over your resume and give you advice on improving it. We also run workshops to help you learn more.

To find out the nearest 2nd Chance location, call 519-823-2440 (if you are in Guelph) or 519-843-5513 or 1-800-478-0961 (if you are in the county), or visit [www.2ndchance.ca](http://www.2ndchance.ca)

You can also find sample resumes and tips in the following books (available at a 2nd Chance location or through the public library) and websites:

Gallery of Best Resumes by David F. Noble  
Damn Good Resume Guide by Yana Parker  
Resumes that Knock 'Em Dead by Martin Yate

[www.workopolis.ca](http://www.workopolis.ca)

[www.monster.ca](http://www.monster.ca)

[www.worksearch.gc.ca](http://www.worksearch.gc.ca)

[www.quintcareers.com/scannable\\_resumes.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/scannable_resumes.html)





# Markhet Ing

345 Lotsofjobs Street, Guelph, Ontario, A1B 2C3  
(519) 777-1234

## JOB OBJECTIVE

An entry-level marketing position in the retail fashion industry

This objective is short and clear

## WORK EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

### Marketing

- Worked in groups and independently to promote new products such as Tiger So Chocolate Ring-Things
- Designed successful promotion strategy for non-profit smoking-reduction program recognized by 78% of high school students surveyed
- Recognized for creativity and insight into what people want
- Thorough understanding of marketing principles and theory

### Customer Relations

- Friendly and professional manner with an emphasis on problem-solving
- Cultivated a regular client base through personalized service
- Promoted to Assistant Manager due to strong interpersonal and leadership skills
- Trusted by business owners to hire and train new employees, handle banking, of close store, and design displays

### Administration

- Familiar with standard office software (Microsoft Word, Excel, Corel WordPerfect, Outlook, etc), as well as several presentation and graphics programs
- Very well-organized and proficient in keyboarding, filing, and data entry
- Quickly pick up new software and procedures with minimal instruction

Because she has limited professional experience, Markhet emphasizes WHAT SHE CAN DO - she describes it in a separate section and puts this section FIRST

## EDUCATION

University of Guelph , Guelph, Ontario

2005

- Received BA Entrance Scholarship
- Courses included several practical and independent applied marketing

If you didn't finish a degree or diploma, just list the school and anything you accomplished there

## WORK HISTORY

**Assistant Manager**  
**Retail Fashion Sales**  
**Retail Fashion Sales**

Conky Clothes (Guelph, Ontario)  
Conky Clothes (Guelph, Ontario)  
Groovy Clothes (Vancouver, B.C.)

2006-present  
2004-2005  
2003

Markhet was fired from this job after a month, so she doesn't mention the month

## VOLUNTEER/PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

**Campaign Assistant**  
**Marketing Assistant**

Guelph Lungs for Life (Guelph, Ontario)  
Big Corporation (Guelph, Ontario)

2007-2008  
2006

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Name and section headings stand out

Job titles stand out

# RESUME WORKSHEET

## Contact Info (Required)

**Your Name:**

**Address (including postal code):**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

## Highlights of Qualifications (Usually a Good Idea)

List short points that an employer would find most important about you

Mix general statements (e.g. "5 years data processing experience") with examples of (e.g. "Type 70 words per minute")

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

This section is easier if you do it last

## Achievements & Awards (Optional)

Include awards and achievements from work, school, volunteering and anywhere else

You could put this information under "highlights" instead

Include the name of any awards, where you got them from, and why you got them.

## Education & Training (Usually a Good Idea)

Include courses that you took outside of school, e.g. at work or private classes

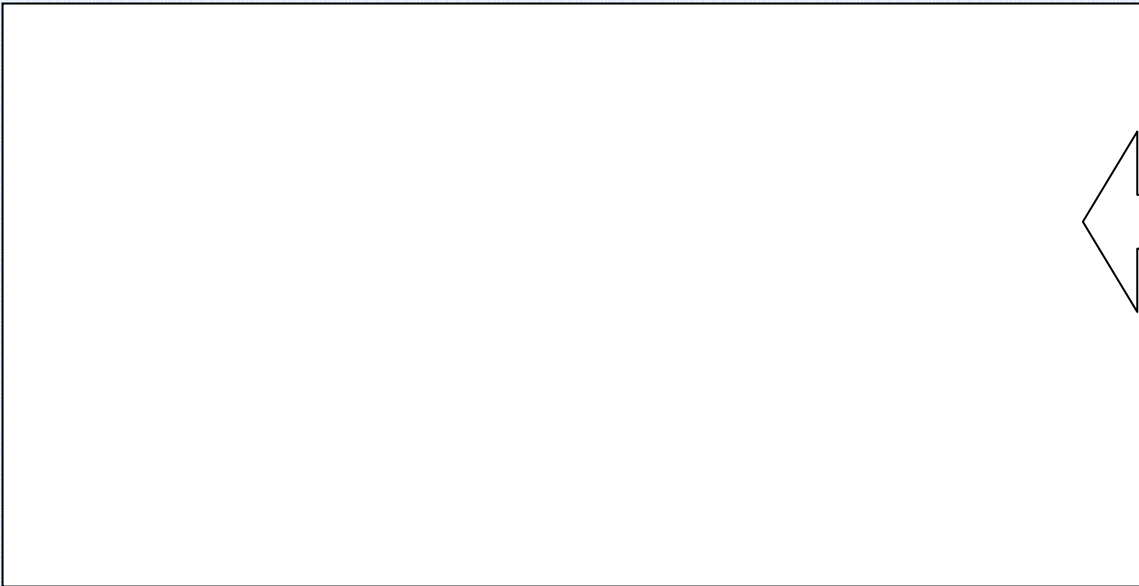
Include

- The name of each diploma, degree or course
- Where you got it from
- When you finished it

If you started at a school but didn't finish your program, don't state when you stopped. Just list the school and any things you did achieve (see sample on page 4)



## Work History (Required)



### Include:

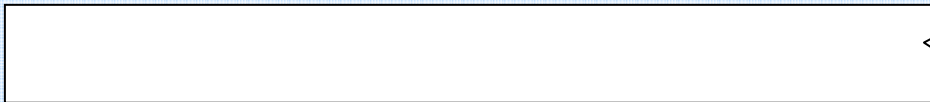
- the name of each job (e.g. "clerk" or "manager")
- where you worked (e.g. "Sears Ltd, Guelph, Ontario")
- when you were there (e.g. "1999 to 2001")
- what you did there (you can be detailed or very brief)

Include the same kind of information as in Work History. If your volunteer work is closely related to the job you want, consider listing paid and volunteer work together.

## Volunteer History (Optional)



## Hobbies, Activities, Interests (Optional)



List things that show relevant skills. E.g. if you want a job working with kids, crafts & sports would be good

## References (Required)

You will put this information on a separate reference sheet. **On your resume, just put "References Available on Request"**

References are people who an employer contacts to find out what kind of employee you are. List the name and title of each reference, then where you know them from and their phone number and (if needed) email address. **Always check to make sure the people you list are willing to talk about you and say positive things.**

